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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3789  
INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 7095  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 1671  
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY 2225  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 3162  
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 1179  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 3612  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 4741  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 2059  
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY 0487  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 002287

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/22/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV JA RU

SUBJECT: JAPAN-RUSSIA VICE MINISTER TALKS: NO PROGRESS ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer. Reasons 1.4 (B) (D)

¶1. (C) Summary. The May 17 Japan-Russia Vice Ministerial talks addressed a range of topics, but focused on preparations for the PM Abe-President Putin meeting on the margins of the G-8, MOFA and Russian Embassy contacts tell Embassy Tokyo political officer. Japan asked for clarification on reports Russia plans to stop allocating fishing quotas to foreign fishing companies. On North Korea, Moscow was "not optimistic" about prospects for an early resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue. Japan expressed hope that Russia's plans to assist Burma to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy would ensure that non-proliferation requirements were in place. Our Russian interlocutors saw little prospect for an early settlement of the Northern Territories issue. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On May 18, MOFA European Affairs Bureau Russian Division Deputy Director Kazuhiko Nakamura gave Embassy Tokyo a readout of the Japan-Russian Vice Ministerial meeting between Deputy Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka and Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov held May 17 in Moscow. Nakamura noted that the discussion focused on preparations for the Abe-Putin meeting on the margins of the G-8 meeting in Germany. The Yabunaka-Losyukov talks covered bilateral and regional topics, but produced no new movement on the disputed Northern Territories issue.

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Bilateral Issues -- Political  
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¶3. (C) Losyukov underlined the importance Russia placed on the Putin-Abe meeting on the margins of the upcoming G-8 summit, which Moscow believes will give "momentum" to Japan-Russian relations. The two men discussed the modalities involved in holding a second full summit, perhaps on the margins of a future multilateral event such as APEC or ASEAN, but did not set a specific date. Yabunaka and Losyukov confirmed that the two countries would hold a strategic dialogue on June 1 in Tokyo, led by Vice Minister Shotaro Yachi and First Deputy Minister Andrei Denisov. They both agreed to continue discussions aimed at resolution of

the Northern Territories (NT) issue, as well as talks on disaster prevention and conservation.

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Bilateral Issues -- Economic  
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14. (C) Yabunaka asked for the release of the Japanese captain and his fishing boat seized January 21, 2007 by the Russian Coast Guard for fishing in Russian-claimed waters near the Northern Territories, according to Nakamura. Yabunaka also asked Losyukov to clarify remarks Putin made to the Duma indicating that Russia plans to stop allocating fishing quota to foreign fishing companies. Russia urged Japan to cooperate on the sustainable development of the Russian Far East and East Siberian region, as well as economic integration between those regions and the East Asian "mega-region."

15. (C) Separately, Russian Embassy First Secretary Yurii Yuriev confirmed that the Yabunaka-Losyukov discussions had been designed to set the stage for the Abe-Putin meeting on the margins of the G-8. Yuriev emphasized that the two leaders were not likely to address the NT issue in depth at the Germany meeting. Moscow officials saw little prospect for an early settlement of the NT issue absent the "development of a strategic relationship" between the two countries - a relationship that would entail conducting "considerable discussion" before a resolution could be reached. Russia and Japan would also need to resolve their differing historical views on the four disputed islands, Yuriev observed.

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Multilateral/Regional Issues  
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15. (C) On North Korea, Losyukov said that Russia was "not optimistic" about prospects for an early resolution of issues related to the DPRK nuclear problem. Yabunaka and Losyukov agreed on the need to maintain the cohesion and unity of the international community, and to take a step-by-step approach.

16. (C) Yabunaka inquired about a Russian agreement, reported in the media, designed to help Burma develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Tokyo "was not 100 percent opposed" to Burma's participation in such programs, Yabunaka said, but believes that nuclear energy programs must have non-proliferation safety and security arrangements in place. Yabunaka asked Losyukov if Burma had taken the necessary steps to fulfill these safety and security requirements, Nakamura said. Japan also expressed the hope that Russia had taken the proper precautions, as well. Losyukov responded that, while Moscow did not want to see Burma become a nuclear power, Russia did not feel it could deny another state the right to pursue the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

SCHIEFFER